

## FASTENER COMPANY OVERCOMES PRODUCTION ISSUES THROUGH LEAN MANUFACTURING

**ABOUT LEVEL 1 FASTENERS.** Since their inception in 1959, Level 1 Fasteners, Inc. has continued to produce the highest quality fasteners for the US Navy and its subcontractors. Level 1 Fasteners, Inc. began in the aerospace community in Southern California. In 1993, Level 1 Fasteners, Inc. moved from Compton, California, to their current home in Huntington, WV so they could be more centrally located to their customer base. Today, Level 1 Fasteners, Inc. continues to provide a variety of products and services for industrial fasteners and related products.

**THE CHALLENGE.** The WVMEP has been engaged with Level 1 Fasteners, Inc. for quite some time, assisting with the development, implementation, and maintenance of their ISO quality system. Level 1 had received lean training several years earlier and had successfully implemented some of the lean concepts. Since that time Level 1 has moved into a much larger facility and also wants to add additional customers. This led them to revisit lean and approached the WVMEP for assistance.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Assistance began with a process assessment to identify areas of need and opportunities for improvement. As a result of this assessment the center proposed several steps. First was a series of Lean 101: An Introduction to Lean Manufacturing classes. Once the classes were finished, the next step was process mapping. The mapping activity was used as a tool to discuss communication, identify areas where waste could be eliminated, and processes could be revised or developed to eliminate non-value adding time. The mapping activity culminated with a list of 32 tasks over 4 categories that would help to improve internal processes at Level 1 Fasteners, Inc. Following the completion of the lean and process improvement work, the WVU Industrial Assessment Center (IAC) will conduct an on site energy assessment to identify opportunities to reduce energy use and or cost.

"The primary benefits the Level 1 Fasteners has seen following lean manufacturing training are twofold: 1. Improved communication through morning meetings and 2. Improved teamwork. Improvements in communication has helped our company to identify and reduce manufacturing bottlenecks when they occur. By involving employees from every department in our morning meetings, all departments are aware of the problems and successes that we are having in our shop. This has led to group problem solving and ownership of making sure work flows smoothly through the different departments. If there are problems in certain areas, everyone now works together to get that area running smoothly. The result has been a dramatic decrease in late jobs even though our throughput has almost doubled. The work completed by the WVMEP helped us identify the need for changes in our communication within our business and helped implementation of the changes. Without their assistance it would have taken much longer to make the small changes that have resulted in major improvements in productivity."

-Andrea Bourelais, Chief Scientific Officer

## RESULTS



Late order reduction of **80%**



Increase monthly sales by **\$200,000**



Lead time reduction from **26** weeks to 2 weeks or less

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